Danish as a Second Language

attitudes, accents, and variation

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Transcription conventions

The transcriptions given in the examples by and large follow the CHILDES conventions (http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/).

xxx marks incomprehensible passages of speech.

%english: idiomatic translations into English

[bla bla bla]: comments and explanations to the speech

Danish as a Second Language: Attitudes, Accents, and Variation

Ursula Ritzau, Marta Kirilova, J. N. Jørgensen

Decades ago, a young Norwegian linguistics student arrived in Denmark. His name was Tore Kristiansen, and he was a Leninist idealist who believed in equality. The experience of meeting Danish reality was a shock to the young man. He was not prepared for the apparent linguistic intolerance he met. He observed for instance that only high status standard Copenhagen speech was used by reporters and announcers in the media. If dialect speakers were interviewed by reporters, their utterances were subtitled in written standard Danish – and not as a service to the hearing-impaired, but because classical dialects were considered foreign languages in the media. He also observed that it was surprisingly difficult for many Danes to understand Norwegian.

All of this made the young man think. He reached the conclusion that the obvious differences between, on the one hand, what he was used to in Norway, and, on the other hand, what he was subjected to in Denmark, were related to attitudes. He found a general tendency among Danes to shut out everything which was not standardized. As an adult linguist he refined the concept of attitudes and the methods for studying language attitudes. He became a major contributor to international sociolinguistics' insights into the relationship between attitudes and language change. In Denmark his work has had a tremendous impact in research and university education – and none whatsoever in the public debates and political decision making.

For instance, Tore Kristiansen has introduced social psychological lines of thinking into Scandinavian sociolinguistics with the specter of methods he applied in his Næstved studies (Kristiansen 1991), and he has done this with unique methodological finesse. In particular, his juxtaposition of the popularity questionnaire and the guise test has had profound influence. Næstved poses a problem to the classical matched guise test (Lambert et al. 1960) because there are few, if any, speakers who can produce convincingly in clearly distinguishable versions of the (ideologically constructed) varieties which are found to be repre-

sented. A matched guise test would be hard to construct because of the lack of speakers who can produce matched versions of the relevant varieties. In order to overcome this difficulty Kristiansen used two voices to represent each of the three varieties, and in the analyses he calculated the results for each voice separately. If the voices representing the same background are treated in the same way by the informants, and this holds over all pairs, there is a good indication that the differences found between the varieties hold. So his test is a controlled guise test, not a matched guise test. Inspired by Kristiansen's work a range of sociolinguists have used controlled guise tests in different more or less experimental versions since then, for instance dgcss 2008, Jørgensen & Quist 2001, Kirilova 2006, Maegaard 2001, 2005, Ritzau 2007.

The distinction between overt and covert attitudes, or conscious and subconscious attitudes, will be particular relevant in societies which think of themselves as tolerant, but which turn out to be the opposite when studied carefully. The comparison between the results of popularity questionnaires and guise tests is a simple, but ingenious method of studying such discrepancies. Kristiansen has argued (1990, 1996) that Denmark is a particularly centralizing and uniform society with respect to language variation. The grade school indirectly enforces the Copenhagen standard as the only valid norm, and at the same time the school system actively promotes a uniformist view on variation. Lip service is paid to the classical dialects, but in effect they are taken to represent low prestige and backwardness. This was not discussed as a problem in Danish sociolinguistics or applied linguistics until Kristiansen 1990 appeared.

The issue of tolerance of Danish spoken with a non-Danish accent in Danish society is therefore a particularly tricky one. In the late 1900's Denmark enjoyed a reputation of being an open, egalitarian, and just society. From 2001 this has changed dramatically, notably because a range of political measures have made life miserable for the linguistic minorities in Denmark. This has roots in the years before 2000, however, as international observers have noticed. An increasingly unfriendly attitude towards minorities developed, supported by extreme right wing politicians and the yellow press. This unfriendly atmosphere was of course strongly felt by minorities. It has not gone unnoticed by outside observers either. The Times' Guide to the Peoples of Europe has a critical remark in which it notices that:

> The Danes have a not altogether deserved reputation for tolerance: immigration from the Third World has sparked some racial tensions and the right wing [... party] adopted a 'send them back' policy (Fernández-Armesto 1997, 33).

Another English-medium observer writes about the growing racial tensions in Scandinavia. As with the Times Guide this is not a scholarly report about an

anthropological project, but nevertheless a serious contributor to the profile and image of Danish society. The Economist observes that:

> Except in the biggest cities of Sweden and Denmark, there are few immigrants, yet those few meet with growing hostility from the indigenous population. Especially in Norway and Denmark, race-tinged populism is growing (The Economist 23 January, 1999)

The discourse in the public debate in Denmark about these issues is rough, and there is no mercy to the minorities, regardless of their status. Speaking Danish with an accent is not acceptable in the perspective of many Danes, even when the speaker is a member of the royal family. The current crown princess has her roots in Tasmania, and she speaks Danish with a noticeable accent. Her father-in-law speaks a varied and sometimes refined Danish – and he has a French accent. Both are routinely ridiculed by the yellow press.

> If Mary [the Crown Princess] does not learn proper Danish, she will end like her father-in-law who, as you know, speaks our mother tongue like a Bulgarian circus director [Gossip magazine "Se & Hør" July 12, 2007, our translation]

Such outrageousness may be taken in stride by the royal family, but it hurts in families who depend for jobs and housing on Danes with similar opinions. Already around 1990 we found that this has an effect on the linguistic minorities. In the NISU study (Boyd et al 1994) the parents of Turkish-speaking Danish grade school beginners sometimes expressed deep pessimism with respect to their children's chances in the Danish school system. In face-to-face interviews the parents frequently referred to the majority Danes' unwillingness to accept deviation. This was also reflected in the importance the parents saw in the children's maintenance of the minority language. Compared to the other minority groups studied, for instance the North American English speakers, see table 1, the Turkish-speaking parents emphasized their mother tongue much less. However, when the parents were asked about their own language behavior towards their children, the picture was reversed. The Turkish speakers used their mother tongue exclusively to a much higher extent than any other group. For comparison with the North American English speakers, see table 2.

Origin\Attitude:	Very Important	Somewhat important	Not very important
North Americans	43 %	42 %	14 %
Turks	26 %	48 %	26 %

Table 1. Parent attitudes to the importance of their children's maintenance of L_1 (percentages).

Origin\Dyad	Adult > Child	Child > Adult	Child > Child
Turks	87 %	77 %	54 %
N.Americans	16 %	19 %	21 %

Table 2. Minority parents who respond that *only* the minority language is used in conversations between different types of interactants in the home (percentages).

This discrepancy was further reflected in the motivation that parents gave for emphasizing Danish and Turkish respectively. Most parents declined to answer to a question which asked them to choose between Danish and Turkish on behalf of their children. They argued that both were necessary. However, the motivations given for learning Danish are mainly instrumental, such as "it is necessary to survive here" and "it gives better opportunities in society", whereas the motivations for Turkish were integrative, as in "my children should not forget their own culture".

Issue\Activity	Stendal	Egø
Visits in homes	0 %	40 %
Religion discussed	0 %	42 %
Co-operation discussed	36 %	77 %

Table 3. Teachers in two communities (columns) who report that they have taken specific initiatives towards minority parents (rows), (percentages).

In Bugge & Jørgensen 1995 we further compared two groups of Turkish-speaking minorities in two different communities in Denmark. One community (Stendal) was aggressively trying to discipline and uniform the minorities, the other community (Egø) was much more open and willing to integrate minority culture in public affairs, in the schools, etc. For instance, the children's teachers reported how often they had visited the children's homes, whether they had discussed controversial issues such as religion with the children's parents and families, etc. As we can see in table 3, there was much more contact between the teachers and the minority parents in Egø than there was in Stendal, and this is symptomatic for the conditions in the two communities at the time.

The comparison between the two minority groups of parents of school children was interesting in several ways.

The attitudes and actions of the parents may be seen to reflect an opposition among the Stendal parents to the Danish authorities' attempts to streamline the minorities. Particularly the "longer" (i.e. into the official Danish school year) stays in Turkey was a controversial issue, and there was at the time a determined drive to punish parents whose children did not show up in the beginning of the school year.

Attitude\Community	Stendal	Egø
More Turkish in school	78 %	31 %
Only Turkish to friends	67 %	38 %
Longer visits to Turkey	93 %	67 %

Table 4. Turkish-speaking parents in two communities (columns) who prefer Turkish for their children, if they have to choose between Danish and Turkish (row 2), who want their children to speak Turkish to their peers (row 3), and who have sent their children to Turkey for longer periods (row 4) (percentages).

We can not be absolutely certain what is cause, and what is effect here. Nevertheless, the answers given to open-ended questions show us that these minority parents are acutely aware of the lack of respect they meet among the majority, including certain authorities.

The NISU study found a profound difference between the North American English speakers and the Turkish speakers. A tentative conclusion was that these differences were to a large extent due to the different ways in which the two minorities were treated by the majority. Kirilova (2006) has studied the differences in majority Danes' attitudes to different minorities. She wanted to find out whether majority Danes distinguish between "good" and "bad" non-native accents, and whether accents perceived to be related to some specific geographical regions are regarded as linguistically more prestigious than others. Her study describes and analyzes how native speakers of Danish react to the pronunciation of Danish with non-native accents. She asks the following questions:

1. How accepted – or little accepted – are foreign accents in Danish among the majority, and are there some accents that sound better to the native speakers of Danish than other accents? Can we identify accents which are considered "bad" while others are considered "good"?

2. Are the age, gender, and education of the native speakers of Danish related to their attitudes towards non-native accent, and if so: how?

3. Are there any stereotypes in the attitudes to non-native accents, and if so: what are they due to?

The method of Kirilova's study is an adapted matched guise technique inspired by Kristiansen. It allows the sociolinguist to a great extent to focus on assessing the reaction of a respondent to one particular form of speech, without this reaction being influenced by other external factors. Kirilova did not – for obvious rea-

sons – use the same speaker for all the varieties, the different accents. It would be impossible to find someone who could convincingly speak Danish with a Bulgarian, an English, and an Icelandic accent – to mention just a few.

The survey deals with 232 respondents, 160 female and 72 male, from the island of Zealand and the capital Copenhagen. The youngest was at the age of 15 and went to school; the oldest was 76 and retired. They were all asked to listen to a recording with 16 different non-native speakers and answer a set of questions in order to evaluate the speakers on different categories, e.g.: whether the speaker seemed stupid or clever, attractive or unattractive, a good or a bad neighbor, reliable or non-reliable as a family physician etc. The respondents were also asked to try to guess from where the speakers originated (see table 5).

What do you think of this speaker? Put a cross mark closest to the category you choose.

Is he/she

1) confident ……insecure
2) ambitious….. careless
3) efficient……inefficient
4) interesting…..boring
5) reliable…..unreliable
6) talented…..stupid
7) pleasant…..unpleasant
8) nice….irritating
9) How well educated do you think this person is?
   Very well - well - middle - poorly - very poorly
10) What do you think this person's social status is?
    Very high - high - middle - low - very low
11) Would you allow this person to be your
    - colleague? - friend? - family physician? - nanny?
12) Where do you think this speaker comes from?
13) What is your general impression of the speaker?

Table 5. Questions in Kirilova's (2006) semi-matched guise test.

The 16 speakers, 8 male and 8 female, had the following non-native accents pairwise: Bulgarian, Polish, Italian, German, Icelandic, American English, Persian, and Mandarin. The youngest speaker was 25 years old, and the oldest was 45. They were all highly educated, either in their home country or in Denmark. For

the purpose of the study Kirilova asked each of them to tell us about their favorite commercial from TV. After she had recorded the data, she chose a 40 seconds long excerpt from each conversation and collected them on a sound file which she played to the 232 respondents. The respondents heard the16 excerpts in random order (two different orders).

Kirilova's results can be summed up in two points:

1) A strong accent plays a certain, but not strongly negative role in the evaluation of the speakers' education and skills.

When Kirilova calculated the answers to the questions about the speakers' abilities and competences and cross-tabulated these with the speakers' accent as the distance to mother tongue Danish (as determined by a group of linguists at the university of Copenhagen), she found that strong accent does not necessarily lead to a negative attitude among the listeners. The rate of speech, on the other hand, plays a certain role for positive attitudes towards the speakers. It seems that a fast rate of speech is understood by the respondents to demonstrate effectiveness and competence. Humor is also a significant factor for positive attitudes, apparently because it makes the speaker sound pleasant and attractive. On the contrary, hesitation seems to indicate to the respondents that the speaker is insecure, and that results in negative evaluations on all categories. Thus, a strong accent with interruptions and hesitation, as well as a slow rate of speech, appears to be the worst combination, while a strong accent and a fast rate of speech is a combination which receives surprisingly positive evaluations.

2) The respondents' perceptions of the speakers' origin is an important factor in the evaluation of their characteristics.

When Kirilova processed the respondents' answers to the question "Where do you think this speaker comes from?", she found that the participants' answers more or less separated speakers into four big groups representing language areas. One group of included speakers judged to speak one of the Germanic languages, another group covered speakers from Eastern and Southern Europe, a third group covered speakers from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, and the fourth group was speakers assumed by respondents to be from Denmark. It is difficult to guess where a person originates purely on the basis of his or her accent, and the respondents' guesses were in some cases quite far-fetched indeed. However, Kirilova's idea was not to test her respondents' phonetic skills, but to find out more about the stereotypes that were connected to each of the mentioned geographical areas.

The respondents were predominantly positive towards the speakers whom the respondents thought to be mother tongue speakers of a Germanic language. To a lesser degree the respondents evaluated positively speakers whom the respondents considered to speak mother tongues from Southern and Eastern Europe. At the bottom Kirilova found the ratings of the speakers thought to be from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. There were significant differences between the evaluations of three groups ($p<.0001$).

The perceived Germanic speakers were placed on top in almost all categories, favored as both competent and having good social flair. They were thought to be significantly better educated and more talented than the other speakers. If the respondents were to choose a family physician, a colleague, or a nanny, they would definitely choose one with a Germanic accent.

The Eastern European and the Southern European accents occupied the middle position in the language hierarchy, while the speakers from the Middle East and Asia were considered incompetent, uneducated, boring, untalented, unreliable, and careless, thus placed at the bottom.

This result is consistent and statistically significant, regardless of the Danish respondents' age, gender, and level of education. It bears witness to deeply rooted stereotypes and pervasive views on non-native accents among majority Danes. Without knowing where the speakers originated from, the majority Danes placed the different non-native accents on a hierarchical scale where some accents are evaluated as significantly better than others. The closer the perceived cultural or geographical connection and the larger the similarity, the bigger the approval, and the likeness; and vice versa, the more distant the relation, the more negative the attitude.

The cross tabulation also gave interesting results. Kirilova found a connection between the respondents' level of education and their general assessment of the speakers. The respondents with a low level of education were generally more negative towards the speakers and gave significantly lower evaluations to the speakers than their highly educated co-respondents. The level of education seems to affect the view on the non-native speakers of Danish *as a whole*. Poorly educated respondents appeared to be much less tolerant to Danish with a non-native accent and did not take heed of immigrants as their friends, colleagues, or family physicians.

Kirilova's results illustrate that native speakers of Danish seem to have a very acute preference for certain accents. The assumed Germanic speakers are favored as relatively intelligent, friendly, and high-educated, while the Middle Eastern accents are associated with very low status and very low levels of education. It is important once again to point out that the respondents did not have any information about the speakers' origin and thus judged purely on the basis of stereotypes.

This means that in some cases the respondents mistook someone who was a Germanic speaker to be from the Middle East, and vice versa. We can conclude that the majority Danish respondents tend to be prejudiced and influenced by the general negative social and political view on foreign immigrants in Denmark, particularly from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia in the beginning of the 2000's. In Kirilova's study majority Danes appear to be conservative and quite normative with respect to pronunciation judging severely every vowel and consonant that differs from native Danish. They distinguish between "good" and "bad" accents. This segregation of accents corresponds to the perception of "prestigious" (Germanic) and "non-prestigious" (Middle Eastern) geographical regions. The prestigious areas bring into being "good" and talented friends, nannies, doctors, and colleagues, while the non-prestigious regions all represent the uneducated and unintelligent "bad" doctors, nannies, and colleagues.

In 2006, Ritzau carried out another semi-matched guise study. She studied the attitudes towards Danish with a foreign accent among non-native Danes, i.e. people who were themselves speakers of Danish with a foreign accent. Two of her main questions were the following:

1. What attitudes towards Danish with a foreign accent are to be found among non-native Danes, i.e. speakers of Danish with a foreign accent?

2. Do the attitudes of non-native Danes resemble those of native Danes?

151 non-native Danes participated in Ritzau's guise test, and in addition 48 of them were interviewed about attitudes towards their own accent and the accents of others. Furthermore, 153 native Danes participated in the same guise test. Ritzau's purpose of including native Danes in the study was to compare their recognition and comprehension of the guise voices with that of the non-native Danes. The native Danes were all students at the Department of Nordic Studies and Linguistics at the University of Copenhagen, and the non-native Danes were all advanced learners who studied Danish at four different language schools in Copenhagen.

The eight voices that were played to the 304 informants belonged to eight different people. Ritzau's test therefore also used an adapted matched guise technique, in which all voices speak their authentic variety of Danish language. Six of the voices belong to Chinese people who speak Danish as a second language, three men and three women. One voice belongs to a native Danish man, and one to a native Danish woman. In matched guise tests studying foreign accents (cf. Kirilova's study), it is not uncommon that voices are assigned to nationalities or mother tongues, with which they are completely unrelated. It also happens that

foreign voices are misjudged to be native Danish. This classification of the voices is even more interesting as the eight voices in the study in addition to the native Danish only represented Danish with a Chinese accent. Ritzau's inclusion of native Danish voices had the additional purpose of finding out whether the non-native Danish informants could actually discriminate native Danish from non-native Danish.

Another variation from the classic matched guise study is that all voices in Ritzau's adaptation of Kristiansen's method, as well as the voices in Kirilova's, represent spontaneous language, i.e. the speakers do not read aloud from a manuscript. All eight voices participated in interviews lasting between 5 and 15 minutes, and the speakers were not instructed to say anything specific – or how to say it. The interviews took place in a familiar environment at a restaurant where all the speakers worked at the time. From each interview Ritzau selected around 30 seconds for the test, the content of which was as neutral as possible. So far the Ritzau study resembles those of Kritisnasen and Kirilova. However, the task presented to the respondents was different.

The eight voices were played to the group of 153 native Danes and the group of 151 non-native Danish language learners. For each voice, the informants had two minutes to answer a questionnaire. The majority Danish respondents answered questions about their comprehension of the voices, they evaluated the language of the speakers, and they judged where the speakers come from. The questionnaire included a combination of closed and open-ended questions, e.g. "How well does the person speak Danish" on a five point scale from "very good" to "very bad", and "What makes the language good or bad? Describe in your own words."

The non-native Danes had a similar, but longer questionnaire. In addition to the already mentioned questions, the non-native Danes were also asked to answer questions about the speakers' presumed educational level, social status, and a bipolar list of adjectives describing personal characteristics; interesting – boring, arrogant – friendly, annoying – agreeable, intelligent – stupid, lazy – laborious, dependable – undependable, insecure – self-reliant, ambitious – indifferent. This last task is similar to the questionnaires of classical matched guise studies, as well as Kristiansen's and Kirilova's studies.

The semi-structured interviews with 48 of the non-native informants took place in face-to-face situations where the interviewees were alone with the interviewer, Ritzau herself who is a native speaker of Danish. Seven themes were discussed, but there was also room for other topics as well as spontaneous questions or comments. The seven questions, or rather: guidelines for choice of themes, were the followin:

1) Do you know anyone who speaks Danish with an accent? What do you think about that? Is it a problem? Is it possible to learn to speak a foreign language without accent? Why (not)?

2) How well do you want to speak Danish? What is more important (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, communication)? How close are you to your target? When will you reach your target?

3) How good is your Danish compared to that of the recorded voices?

4) Tell me about a situation where you experienced a positive and/or a negative reaction to your accent. How did it feel?

5) Tell me about a situation where somebody corrected your pronunciation. How did it feel? Do you correct other people's pronunciation?

6) Did you ever meet anyone who speaks your mother tongue with a foreign accent? What do you think about that?

7) How do other people react to your mother tongue spoken with a foreign accent? Do you know anyone, who feels annoyed about it?

Ritzau has analyzed all questionnaire answers from the guise test statistically, and the interviews are analyzed statistically and qualitatively. As expected, the informants placed the eight voices in a wide range of places, regions, countries and ethnic groups. The answers ranged from easily categorizable places like *Africa, Northern Europe, Syria,* or *southern Copenhagen* to more ambiguous suggestions such as *not Denmark, Mediterranean, Eskimo/Slavic,* or even *circus/gypsy*. But for a very few exceptions the informants were not able to recognize the Chinese voices as Chinese.

The native Danes mainly succeed in identifying the two Danish voices as Danish. They find that these are easier to understand, and that the speakers express themselves better and speak better Danish. 88% of the native Danish informants identify the Danish female voice as Danish, and 81% identify the Danish male voice as Danish. This is a very clear result, since no Chinese voice is considered Danish by more than 19% of the native Danes. It is interesting, however, that not all informants recognize the two Danish voices as Danish. Some even write comments such as "*The only problem was incorrect syntax here and there, but apart from that it was good*" or "*Very little accent [...] describes things colorfully, but a bit childish*". These quotes (and other similar statements) suggest

that if you expect to hear a foreign accent, you might actually hear a foreign accent, even if there is none. It is also worth noting that some Chinese voices are considered Danish.

The non-native Danes do also recognize the Danish voices as Danish, but not as easily as the native Danish informants. The Danish female voice is considered Danish by 88% (same as by the native Danes), but the Danish male voice is only considered Danish by 69%, which is not much more than a couple of the Chinese voices who are perceived as Danish by 67% and 65% of the non-native informants. These results are worth a further discussion.

Both the native and the non-native Danes are in favor of the female Danish voice, Sara (pseudonym), when it comes to comprehensibility and evaluation of the language, but the distance between the non-native informants' rating of Sara and Julius, the male Danish voice, is remarkable. The non-native informants recognize Julius as Danish, but they do not consider his language better or easier to understand for this reason. In fact, the evaluations of Julius are less positive than those of Sara and the two Chinese voices, Yan Yan and Liang. Furthermore, Yan Yan, Liang, and Sara are thought to have longer educations and higher social status than the Danish man.

These evaluations may surprise, especially when we consider that Julius is recognized as Danish. It is important to notice, however, that even though Julius is considered Danish by more respondents than any of the Chinese voices, the difference is not very big. One explanation for the fact that Julius does not receive particularly positive evaluations could be that the non-native Danes most likely have other and less stereotypical perceptions about foreigners, since they are foreigners themselves – and may therefore be more likely to know some of the (few) non-native Danes with prestigious positions in society. As we have seen in Kirilova's study, native speakers of Danish apparently typically judge foreigners as poorly educated, unintelligent, and bad language users, whereas non-native speakers themselves will know that things are not that simple. The minority speakers do not, therefore, automatically act on the assumption that native Danes are better educated or have a higher social status than non-native Danes.

Sara, Yan Yan, and Liang receive the most positive evaluations on most of the questions. Julius is not part of this high-scoring group. We notice that only 20% of the informants think that Liang is Danish. It is thus quite clear that the non-native informants do not base their evaluations of the voices solely on the accent. All in all, the most positively evaluated voice is that of Liang. It is difficult to determine exactly why this is the case. Ritzau has explored differences in laughter, smiling voice, pauses, repetitions, and speech rate, but these factors can not explain the different evaluations of the voices. The only factor that seems to be common to all three of the positively evaluated voices is that these are regarded

as easily comprehensible. It does seem to make sense to evaluate people more positively when you understand what they say. There is no correlation to be found, however, between the voices which are considered difficult to understand and the voices which are negatively evaluated.

In the case of Liang who is the most positively evaluated voice, one more explanation is plausible. Liang uses two English loan words in his 30 second sample, and he is more often than all other voices considered to be English-speaking. It is no secret that English speakers are considered prestigious, and this could be an explanation for the fact that Liang is so positively evaluated.

It is interesting that the non-native informants do not display the same attitudes in Ritzau's interviews as they do in the guise test. Obviously, answers in a semi-structured interview are more complex and ambiguous than those of a questionnaire, and so, for an overview of the answers, Ritzau constructed a set of categories based on frequent answers.

1) *Speaking Danish with a foreign accent is a problem*. Most of the interviewees find it disadvantageous to speak Danish with a foreign accent, and reasons therefore are many and varied. Some mention that it is more difficult to find a job, others that it sounds bad or that it hinders communication.

2) *It is possible to learn to speak a foreign language without a foreign accent*. More than 70% think it is possible to learn speaking a foreign language exactly like a mother tongue speaker, but most of the interviewees mention different constraints such as personality, aptitude and especially age. There seems to be a common belief that children or youngsters have this ability, whereas adults do not.

3) *I want to speak like a Dane*. 28% of the interviewees strive to speak Danish like a Dane, but most do not consider this possible. Either, they think they are too old to learn, or they think Danish is a particularly difficult language. Several interviewees argue that the Danish language is less clear than other languages, and that the Danes do not pronounce words properly. We will return to this point below.

4) *Pronunciation is the most important skill when learning Danish*. More than a third of the interviewees find that this statement is true, and no other single skill is regarded as most important by a larger number of interviewees. Many say that it is important because the Danes are not so used to foreign accents.

5) *Pronunciation is the most difficult skill when learning Danish*. Exactly half of the interviewees find that pronunciation is the most difficult skill, and with ref-

erence to other academic work, this is no surprise. The question is why they find pronunciation difficult. Some researchers (Grønnum 2003; Skovholm 1996; Basbøll & Bleses 2002) claim that Danish really is more difficult than other languages, whereas a more likely explanation is that the Danish speech community is extremely intolerant (Kristiansen 1990; Kristiansen 2003; Jørgensen 2005).

6) *Negative experience: I have had communication problems, or Danes prefer speaking English*. Of course, it is not surprising that language learners experience communication problems, and 35% of the interviewees choose this topic when they are asked to talk about a negative experience. 13% choose to talk about the problem that Danes often prefer speaking English, when they find out that their conversational partner is not Danish. The striking point here is the arguments which are presented. One interviewee says that Danes are probably not so used to hearing and understanding foreign accents as e.g. Englishmen, because Denmark now experiences the first large inflow of foreigners. Another one says: "*Danes have trouble understanding foreigners, if they don't have a Danish accent. I don't know if they can't understand, or if they don't want to understand. That I don't know*".

7) *I and others react positively when my mother tongue is spoken with a foreign accent*. As many as 89% of the interviewees state that they react neutrally or positively when they hear their mother tongue spoken with a foreign accent. The reactions vary from "*that's okay*" to distinct pride as in the following quote: "*I get very happy if they speak Persian, and it is true, I like it very much in my heart that they speak my mother tongue. It doesn't matter how they speak, it doesn't matter if they don't have a good pronunciation, if only they want to learn my mother tongue.*" 65% say that where they come from, nobody gets irritated when hearing their own language spoken with an accent. This shows that many of the interviewees consider themselves more tolerant towards foreign accents than their fellow countrymen. This might be because they have experienced the troubles of learning a new language themselves, or because they want to look tolerant. Some interviewees state that mostly only elderly people react negatively to foreign accents, i.e. they exclude themselves from the group of negatively positioned people.

From all of these answers, two important points stand out. Firstly, Danish is considered a particularly difficult language, and secondly, the Danish speech community is considered to be less tolerant than other speech communities.

Let us have a look at the last point first. Most interviewees find that speaking Danish with a foreign accent is a problem, whereas they react positively to their

own mother tongues spoken with foreign accent. Possible explanations could be that the interviewees want to appear tolerant, that they are actually tolerant, maybe because they know the difficulties of learning a foreign language, or finally that other speech communities are really more tolerant towards non-standard varieties than is the case in Denmark. That Danish is particularly difficult to learn, is sometimes claimed also in academic discourse (see the references above). If language teachers present Danish as a particularly difficult language, it is no wonder that learners believe so too.

With respect to the second point, we can no longer be surprised that language learners have also noticed the intolerance of accents among native speakers of Danish. It is, in fact, the most likely reason behind the first point. If Danish is difficult to learn, it is because the Danish speech community is closed, arrogant, and only lets others in according to a very hierarchical principle favoring Germanic speakers.

The matched guise test and the interviews do not show exactly the same results. In the guise test the informants find foreign accent irrelevant, but in the interviews they find a foreign accent problematic. The language learners in this study live in Denmark and know what the Danes and Danish society expect from them. They know that the Danes only accept one kind of Danish, i.e. standard Danish. At the same time, the same informants know the troubles of learning a new language, and they have nothing against foreign accents as such. Some express pride of hearing foreigners speak their language, some are used to it and find it unproblematic. This is what the interviewees verbalize. In the matched guise test, the informants evaluate the voices on the basis of other factors than accent. They prefer voices which they understand, and they prefer the one voice that is considered English-speaking. It seems, therefore, that accents as such are irrelevant, but that language (including accent) hierarchies are not. All in all, Ritzau found that the non-native Danes in this study conceive of Denmark as an intolerant speech community, but that the respondents are not intolerant towards foreign accents themselves.

Kirilova and Ritzau have both been inspired by Kristiansen's line of thinking and his methods. The studies clearly indicate that Denmark is a society which is particularly intolerant to foreign accents. This fact may contribute to explaining some of the older observations from the NISU (Boyd et al. 1994) and Køge (Jørgensen 2003) projects. It may be part of the explanation why Turkish speakers in Stendal use more Turkish than the Turkish speakers in Egø. The feeling of rejection among the minorities in Stendal is more acute and omnipresent than is the case in Egø. The minority reactions may reflect the difference in pressure against the minority language, and the differences in behavior are effects of this.

The intolerance of Danish spoken with a foreign accent can be understood as a phenomenon which closely corresponds to the uniformation of spoken Danish

which Kristiansen (1990) documents. The tendency to not accept deviations from a very narrow norm is the same in the two tendencies. The tendencies would be likely to have the same ideological background – to quote a Dane who moved to Norway, they indicate the principle of the Jante Law ("Don't think you are anything special", etc.).

Kristiansen (1996) describes the ideological differences between the speech community of Denmark and that of Norway. The comparison is decidedly favorable for Norway, and Kristiansen ascribes this to the different ideologies of language variation which dominate the public discourses in the two nations. He does not mention the Jante Law, but he describes the ever centralizing tendencies in Denmark. The prestige which comes with being central appears literally in the sense that Copenhagen is the epicenter of cultural change, including linguistic change. Kristiansen stubbornly refuses to think of language change as related to superficial or material phenomena. He maintains that the linguistic uniformation of Denmark is a result of the prestige ascribed to Copenhagen. Speakers choose the Copenhagen forms, because they do not want to be considered peripheral.

This is a self-perpetuating development, and it is renewed and confirmed by the presence of non-native speakers of Danish, Norwegian-based or Turkish-based. The difference is that Norwegians will sometimes be taken seriously, the Turks never.

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Attitudes in Japan and China towards Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, UK and US Englishes

Peter Garrett

General issues in researching language attitudes

Language attitudes research in which attitudinal data is sought directly from respondents (rather than from, say, media discourse, public documentation, etc) needs always to face the methodological challenge of ensuring the data represents their true attitudes rather than answers they think the researchers are looking for (e.g. Boyd, 2003: 293), or will look more socially acceptable than their real views (see Garrett, 2005, 2010; Garrett, Coupland & Williams, 2003, for overviews).

When such biases are unlikely, attitudes can be accessed through direct methods: e.g. simply asking people what their attitudes are. In Lasagabaster (2003), for example, students were asked to signal their level of agreement or disagreement with statements about the Basque language, Spanish and English. There are also perceptual dialectological and folklinguistic techniques, which can include asking respondents to draw on a blank map where they believe various language varieties are spoken, and then write in whatever labels they like for each variety. Such data is often highly evaluative and attitudinal rather than just descriptive.

Where such biases are likely, conscious attention and engagement are arguably required for them to have an influence on responses (see, for example, the summary by Perloff, 2008: 96ff). Information processing theory, for example, argues that people engage in such controlled processing when they have both the *motivation* and the *ability* or *opportunity* to do so (see Perloff, 2008: 173ff). A feeling that one's real attitudes could meet with considerable social disapproval may provide motivation to present more socially desirable ones. Where such motivation might be present, researchers can try to reduce opportunities for controlled processing of the issues underlying these biases. To this end, indirect methods attempt to conceal from respondents the goals of the research (Dawes &